

Playing for Keeps

LogicalBookThief

Playing for Keeps by LogicalBookThief

Category: IT (Movies - Muschietti), IT - Stephen King

Genre: Eddie Kaspbrak Loves Richie Tozier, Eddie Kaspbrak is a Little Shit, Game Shows, Humor, Implied Sexual Content, M/M, POV Outsider, Public Display of Affection, Rated T for Trashmouth, Richie Tozier Loves Eddie Kaspbrak, Richie Tozier is a Little Shit, Romance, aka the one where rich and eds nearly drive a game show host to madness

Language: English

Characters: Eddie Kaspbrak, Original Characters, Richie Tozier

Relationships: Eddie Kaspbrak/Richie Tozier

Status: Completed

Published: 2019-11-26

Updated: 2019-11-26

Packaged: 2019-12-19 15:51:35

Rating: Teen And Up Audiences

Warnings: No Archive Warnings Apply

Chapters: 1

Words: 3,386

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

"Before the break, we asked our contestants: who was your first love? Richie, what did you write?"

Your mom

"Heh. That's what we get for inviting a comedian on the show," Chet snorts. "Very mature, Mr. Trashmouth. Maybe your partner can illuminate us. You guys were childhood friends, right? So fill us in, Eddie. Who was Richie's first love?"

Rolling his eyes, Eddie flips over his card.

My mom

*

*

Richie and Eddie go on a game show for couples. Nobody expects

them to be such a dream team. And nobody suffers as much as the host.

Playing for Keeps

Author's Note:

What started as [an idea I had and shared on tumblr](#) has evolved into this fic, happily produced as I procrastinated on other things. If nothing else, it gave me a reason to binge funny Family Feud compilations on YouTube for hours at a time.

Chester "Chet" Robinson may be a beloved American TV icon, but he's also a god-fearing man. As was his mama, his grandma, and probably her mama before her. He was raised up to be a good, Christian boy. You wouldn't find him on TMZ's tabloid radar. He's always polite to his contestants. He's hosted countless charity functions.

So for the life of him, Chet cannot figure out what he's done to deserve this level of smiting.

It all starts with the show's third season premiere. Chet takes a few, fortifying breaths before the announcer's voice blares over the speaker.

"Welcome to this week's episode of **Couple's Therapy!** With your host, Chet Robinson!"

Chet struts onto the stage, basking in the audience's applause. "Thank you, thanks! We've got a special one for you today, folks! As you know, this season we're doing our celebrity contestants."

He lets the audience cheer awhile before he quiets them, so he can introduce this week's contestants. They've got a TV actress and her college sweetheart, a musician who's new album will be hitting the shelves soon, along with—

"Next, we've got... Ho, boy." Chet shakes his head. "Don't know who though this would be a good idea for network television."

Except he knows exactly who it was. The executives love to spice

things up for the viewers at home and notoriously raunchy comedians were always a smash hit. Although it was often at the expense of whatever poor sap they were dating.

"We'll be cancelled before this episode airs," he sighs long-sufferingly, much to the audience's delight. "Introducing Mr. Trashmouth himself, comedian Richie Tozier! And his boyfriend, Eddie!"

The applause is almost deafening. Frankly, Chet never understood the hype. Even after shelling out money for tickets at his nephew's earnest birthday request, he wasn't a fan of Tozier's material. But there was no disputing his appeal, especially in light of his recent comeback.

Despite all the tabloid hype since he publicly came out and reports of how besotted the comedian was, Chet did not have a fully formed expectation of what Tozier's boyfriend would be. He did not expect a man who, at 5'9" (if he was being generous) is dwarfed by Tozier's gangly size, wearing a salmon button-down and tight-fit jeans. Clearly, there's only room in the relationship for one person with hair-management skills, and that was the little guy. The pink slit of a scar on his cheek was also a surprise, but that is *definitely* none of business.

Chet saunters over to the happy (for now) couple, as is his routine. "How you doing tonight, Eddie?"

"I'd be better if *someone*," and here, Eddie jerks a thumb at Richie, who's positively preening, "Actually did what I told him to do for once."

Richie waves Chet over to explain. "They asked if I'd rather you refer to him as my partner or my boyfriend. I went with the latter."

Eddie huffs. Chet gets the impression Richie did this solely to get a rise out of him.

"He says it sounds like we're thirteen," Richie confides, in Chet, his co-contestants and the millions of viewers.

"You act like you're thirteen," Eddie scoffs, drawing a chuckle out of

the audience.

"Only 'cause you make me feel young, baby." If it is a bit, it's a damn good one; Tozier truly sounds like a man who's smitten. He smooches Eddie on the cheek, which has the audience cooing.

Eddie breaks out in blush, right where Tozier planted a wet one on him. Otherwise, though, the guy looks supremely unimpressed, which is precisely the dynamic his producer's were hoping for.

"Alright, that's enough. Save the sweet talk for later," he says, ignoring Tozier's leer. "We've got a game to play. Contestants, let's go over the rules."

"We ask a question, then you and your partner have twenty seconds to jot down an answer. The goal is for your card to match what your partner writes. Is everybody ready?" They nod. "With twenty seconds on the clock, the question is: Which of your physical features would you say your partner finds most attractive?"

Chet makes a rueful noise. "Men, be very careful with your answers."

Twenty seconds go by with ease. He spends a decent amount of time with the TV actress and her beau – "my *cute button* nose? Seriously, Brad?" "What, it's true!" "You know I felt pressured to get a nose job in high school and I've regretted it ever since, you ass!" "I do?" "I told you years ago, did you ... were you even listening to me?!" – and that's fine by Chet. He can practically feel Tozier's anticipation as his turn approaches.

"Now Richie, why don't you tell the nice folks at home what you think Eddie finds most attractive about you?"

"With pleasure, Chet," Richie salutes, and, without any further warning, unveils his answer.

My massive dick

Predictably, the audience goes wild. Having predicted something to this effect, Chet stares directly into the camera.

"I don't know what I was expecting, honestly," he admits. "I'm sure

nobody's less surprised than you, huh," Chet adds, sympathetic toward Eddie.

Eddie shrugs, stubbornly tight-lipped. He seems like a repressed guy, not the type to cause a scene in public like the younger couple did. Might explain why he's not biting Tozier's head off as they speak. Given the "boyfriend vs. partner" debacle, Chet can imagine the earful the comedian will get once they're home.

"Okay, so the folks at home are dying to know. What *do* you find most attractive about your partner?"

Given his cue, Eddie flips over the card. Nothing could've prepared Chet for what he wrote.

His frankly massive dick

The crowd goes absolutely feral. Wolf-whistles and laughter mingle until it's nothing but a full-blown cacophony against his eardrum.

Richie whoops out a high, "Yes!" He sticks up a hand and they high-five. Chet watches in a scandalized, slack-jawed daze.

"I know, I know." Noticing the host's stupor, Eddie gestures helplessly. "A guy who brags about his junk as much as him should not have one so big, but..."

Massive, he mouths the word reverently. Chet stumbles over to the podium, trying not to trip over Tozier's ego.

"You... You can't say that on TV," he says faintly.

"Sure we can," Richie crows. "Freedom of speech, hello? If my boyfriend wants to appreciate my dick on national television, that's his right!"

"Partner," Eddie corrects.

Chet boggles. "That is *not* the complaint you should have about what he just said!"

And that's only the beginning.

*

*

*

They ended the first episode with a unprecedented perfect score, which basically ensured them a spot in the next one. Chet wasn't sweating it too bad.

Sooner or later, every couple was stumped, or argued, or revealed a devastating secret in front of the cameras. With the way these two bickered, he figured it was only a matter of time before Tozier and his boyfriend exited the honeymoon suite and started going for each other's throats.

"Welcome back, folks! Before the break, we asked our contestants: who was your first love?" He smirks a little, to himself. Questions like these always ended with either a heartwarming declaration of love or one of the contestants sleeping on the couch for the foreseeable future. "Richie, what did you write?"

Judging by his smirk, Chet reckons the answer is supremely dumb or exceedingly inappropriate. Turns out, it's both.

Your mom

"Heh. That's what we get for inviting a comedian on the show," Chet snorts. "Very mature, Mr. Trashmouth. Maybe your partner can illuminate us. You guys were childhood friends, right? So fill us in, Eddie. Who was Richie's first love?"

Rolling his eyes, Eddie flips over his card.

My mom

Chet feels a twitch developing in his left brow.

"Aww, Eds," Richie snickers. "You remember!"

"Fuck you," Eddie deadpans. "It wasn't funny when we were twelve and it isn't funny now."

"They why are you smiling?" Richie cups him by the chin, teasing a thumb over lips that twitch under the attention.

"Because I think we broke the host."

Richie swerves around, fingers still caressing his boyfriend's face. "Chet, buddy? You in there?"

"Unfortunately," Chet grunts. Richie laughs and then goes back to Eddie, nosing precariously close to his neck.

When he said they'd be at each other's throats, this is *not* what he meant.

*

*

*

"What is your partner most afraid of?"

Eddie reveals his answer with a remarkable amount of nonchalance, considering what he's written.

Waking up to discover I really was murdered by the clown that terrorized us as kids

Nervously, Chet laughs. "Well, that is ... incredibly specific."

"And he's right!" Richie declares. His expression softens to an impossible degree. When he speaks, the tone is firm, nearly somber in its sincerity: "I would've never that happen, babe."

"I know, Rich." Eddie smiles fondly, reaching out to squeeze his hand. "Geez. You sap."

The audience erupts into a long, adoring, "Awww."

Beads of sweat roll down Chet's forehead.

"We are talking about a metaphorical clown here? Right, guys? ...Right?"

*

*

*

Chet may or may not waste a few hours that night researching *homicidal clowns*, *Derry ME*? This does not lead to anything conclusive or happy.

He's stressed, sleep-deprived. He thinks he's losing his hair. Basically at the end of his rope.

"Guys, please." Instead of introductions, Chet requests this of them plainly. "Please, I'm begging. Can we have one, *one* clean show? If not for me, do it for the kids at home. Those poor, easily corruptible children."

"I'll behave if he does," Eddie mutters. Richie crosses his heart.

That lasts for all of five minutes.

"I can't believe you're going to make me say this on TV!"

"Me?" Richie cackles. "I'm not making you do anything!"

Eddie jabs a finger into his chest, prompting an "ooh" from the audience. "You are! I know what you said, you freak, and now *I* have to say it out loud."

"No you do not!" Chet pleads, verging on desperate.

"See? Listen to our buddy Chet."

"Do *not* bring me into this—" Chet hisses, rearing on the comedian. "—this nasty lil' game of yours."

"You would like that, wouldn't you?" Eddie narrows his eyes. "Nice try, Tozier. I'm here to win."

He sounds so goddamn determined and there's no mistaking the glint of competition in his glare. It would be intense if not for Richie

pinching his cheek, chanting, "cute, cute, cute!"

"For those of you unaware, my darling Eds and I have a bet about which one of us knows the other the best. Whoever is the first to get an answer wrong loses." Richie leans into the mic, shit-eating grin at maximum volume. "Which he is obviously in danger of doing, hence this pathetic attempt at stalling."

"I know what you said!" Eddie insists.

"Then what did I say?" Richie asks doggedly. Eddie tries to respond, succumbs to giggles instead. Richie keeps at it, though. "Huh, smart guy? What is it? What's my *favorite* midnight snack?"

Red in the face, Eddie turns it over.

Ass

"For the love of-!" Chet throws down his cards. Eddie dissolves into hysterics, shoulders shaking with the force of his laughter.

"Why is that embarrassing?" Richie demands.

"Because it's my ass, you jerk!" Eddie wheezes through gasps for air.

"And it's a compliment *to* your ass!" He slams a fist on the podium like a judge banging his gavel. "Babe, I love your ass. I'd die for it. Hell, I almost did."

"Excuse me?" Chet whips toward the audience. Do they hear this shit, too, or is only he blessed with this crazy?

"I'm no religious man, but I'd get on my knees and worship that ass." Richie offers a salacious wink. "And I have."

"Shut up!" Chet snaps. Richie puts a hand to his mouth, the picture of innocence.

"And you shut up, too!" He points at Eddie, just in case, even though he's barely recovered his breath. "Have you two absolutely no shame? Not even for the sake of your mothers, watching this at home?"

"My mom's very supportive of my career and my relationship," says Richie, waving at the camera. "Love you, Mags."

"Mine's dead," Eddie adds, swiping at the tears on his cheek. "But if she wasn't, this probably would've killed her."

"Sonia was a sensitive woman," Richie concedes. "Even more so in bed—"

"What is *wrong* with y'all?!" Chet yells.

Looking him dead in the eye, Richie replies, "We had a very deprived childhood."

At this point, there's no way to tell if he's kidding or not.

*

*

*

"Mr. Robinson?" Gemma knocks at his dressing room. He's flat on the couch, a cold compress on his forehead, the lights dimmed down low. "Uh. Why are you lying alone in the dark?"

"Do you believe in soulmates?" he asks in a dazed voice.

"What, do you mean like, when they had that CGI baby imprint on Jacob in *Twilight*?"

Chet closes his eyes. Makes a mental note never to hire somebody under twenty-five again.

"No," he says, thickly. "I mean, when two people are brought together by God for a reason. To serve some higher purpose, something bigger than themselves."

Moved by his description, she replies, "Then yeah, sure."

Gravely, Chet nods. "I think Tozier and his boyfriend were brought together to punish me," he states with absolute conviction. "Part of

some divine retribution for something I haven't done yet."

She pauses a minute to digest this.

"Mr. Robinson, do you need me to get you anything?" she asks gently. "Like an advil? Or a drink?"

"I need these two bozos off my show!" Chet grumbles, swinging his legs off the couch. His eyes lock onto her in a sort of frenzy. "And *you* can help me."

"Oh, I dunno," Gemma hesitates. "Mr. Tozier and his boyfriend are always nice to me on set, plus, what's the harm in letting them play?"

"Six days," he says, frantically. "A six day win streak, and they've already turned this show into a venue for their public foreplay! They *must* be stopped."

"How?" she responds. "The ratings are great; no way they get the boot from the producers. Our viewers love the banter. It helps that they genuinely seem to know and *like* each other? God, that's so cynical but it's true."

"You've got a point," Chet hums, and Gemma sags, believing she's finally gotten through to him. "So we'll have to break them up."

Which is how Chet begins to plot his sabotage of Richie Tozier's relationship.

*

*

*

"What song would your partner associate with their first romantic heartbreak?"

The contestants tilt their heads in confusion. Off-stage, Gemma shoots him the guiltiest of thumps up.

"Come on, really?!"

"Sorry, Chef Flay. If you can't handle the heat, stay out of the kitchen!" Chet jeers, wrangling a wave of laughter out of the audience. "Contestants, you have twenty seconds on the clock."

You'll need it, he thinks gleefully. His gaze drifts to Eddie, who looks put-upon as he slowly scribbles down a response. Richie steals glances at him every chance he gets, the nerves evident as he bites his lip. Chet would feel guilty, too, if this didn't feel so righteous.

Most of them don't have a clue, so they guess. Songs about heartache, loneliness, anything to fit the mood. Eddie's answer garnered a couple of raised eyebrows, as it decidedly did not match this theme. Sensing the bewilderment, he elaborates.

"God, we must've been, what, fourteen? A girl asked me to my first dance and I was *so* anxious. I almost had an asthma attack. I wasn't even sure if I wanted to go. Probably, in hindsight, because I was, uh. Gay." He chuckles self-consciously.

"My friends encouraged me, so you know, I go. And it turned out, it was a joke her friends dared her to do, so I was just - I dunno, relieved and yet still bummed?" Eddie exhales, trying to expel the pitiful atmosphere of the memory. "Anyway. All I remember is this song was playing at the dance and it sucked because I actually liked it a lot."

While he's clarifying the details, Richie stays mysteriously silent. Chet takes it as a sign of defeat, until it's time for Richie to reveal what he wrote. Nobody is more surprised by it than him – except for maybe Eddie.

Girls Just Want to Have Fun

"Y-You remember that?" Eddie stammers, all demure and wide-eyed. "It was over twenty years ago. I can't believe you remember that."

"Duh. How could I not?" Richie tries to play it off as no big deal. Heat creeps up his neck, splotches of pink crawling across his face. Eddie stares, transfixed, and it's the trigger for that motormouth to start moving. "I-uh. When I saw you at the dance that night, you were– I remember thinking how *stupid* that girl was for dumping you and

how fucking *relieved* I was that she did. And how, uh, nice I thought you looked..."

"Rich," Eddie breathes, so quiet it's scarcely audible. He leans in to kiss him, slow and sweet on the lips. Tozier lights up like a Christmas tree. The audience melts into putty.

Chet clamps his teeth over his knuckle to keep from screaming.

*

*

*

By the eighth consecutive round of this madness, Chet has given up. Resigned himself to hearing Tozier joke about his massive dick as part of some eternal damnation. Doesn't mean he has to be enthusiastic about it, though.

"What's the best gift your partner has ever given you?" He flicks his wrist toward the clock. "Contestants, you know the drill."

He pays no attention to Eddie's answer. If he hears another one of those saccharine, sickly-sweet responses he'll be sick.

"Oh, man." As his turn rolls around, Richie exhales sulkily. "Guess I'm losing the bet."

"What?" Eddie and Chet say in unison. The latter with thinly disguised hope, the former with distrust.

Suspicion gradually morphs to confusion, as Richie appears to really be bummed by this blunder. Even the crowd ripples with discontent.

Chet wonders if it's too soon to do a jig.

"You got it wrong?" Frowning, Eddie prods, "What did you say?"

Richie fiddles with his card, as if embarrassed. Finally, he gathers the nerve.

A ring

"*Son of a bitch*," Chet exclaims. It takes Eddie a moment to realize, and by then, Richie's already slipped down to one knee.

"Eds, I love you," Richie chokes up. There's a layer of honest-to-God tears in his eyes. "I've wanted to marry you since - well, at the risk of humiliating myself on TV, let's just say a *long* fucking time. And if there's anything I learned on this show, there's nobody in the world more perfect for me than you. So, uh. Will you-?"

"Yes!" He doesn't even get the words out before Eddie's lips are on him, pressing against his brow, his nose, and finally, sealing over his lips. Despite Richie's *obscenely* vocal protest, Eddie pulls away, just enough to say, "Fuck, Rich, I love you so much. I want to spend the rest of my life with you."

Apparently incapable of *not* kissing him after that, Richie dives back in for another. The clamor of the audience has reached dog-ear decibels. On an unrelated note, that twitch of Chet's returns with a vengeance.

"Congrats, you two! You ... definitely deserve each other!" He pastes on a smile for the cameras.

Hang on, though. If Tozier wasted his answer on the proposal... It means he broke the streak. They're done. *Finished!*

It's almost too good to be true. You dream of something for so long, pray for it every night, but to have it within reach, it's overwhelming-

"And Chet, buddy! Before I forget," Richie interrupts, cheerfully unaware of Chet's inner rejoice. His big mouth, swelled from all the face-sucking, tilts into a smirk. "I've also got a question for you."

He suppresses the instinctive burst of dread, even as he gestures for the comedian to continue.

"I figured, hey, since you played a role in this proposal-you could play a part in the wedding, too."

"O-Oh?" he manages to croak. The crowd applauds with approval.

Richie nods as Eddie hangs off his arm. Obviously, they're of the same mind about this as they are everything else.

"You're an ordained minister, aren't you?"

Author's Note:

Am I capable of writing a Reddie one-shot that doesn't culminate in a marriage proposal? Perhaps not

Let me know what you thought down below! I'm also over at [ye olde tumblr](#).